



# The disappearing plane



robots

suspense

technology

422 41 23

## Chapter 1 by Story Wars

'Hi, my name is Maggie, and I work for AAA, (Automated Airline Anywhere), a new and upcoming way to travel. I'm a flight attendant and was recently hired to be one of just a few, to fly on its first flight.

When I first heard about AAA, I thought to myself, 'How cool would that be (and terrifying, I had to admit), to fly on an airplane that was solely flown by a computerized robot?' Word quickly spread across the aviation world, as well as the general public. Of course, there was the typical skepticism. Even I was skeptical.

But how exciting would it be to work on such a plane? Or how scary?

I soon found out, just how scary it was going to get.

## Chapter 2 by Grant Robertson



I took the bus to work like I would any other day.

The outside of the airport was a buzz with reporters, photographers, security and plane spotters.

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As I scanned in, I saw a line

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Due to the vast amount of reporters and photographers, I could only get a quick glimpse of the figure getting out. He was unmistakable though.

It was Nigel Roche, the founder of AAA.

When he was a teenager, Nigel and his roommate created an online video streaming site. It went on to become one of the most popular apps in the world and made Roche one of the richest men in the world. No one really knew what happened to his roommate but Roche went onto make even more money in computer hardware, a news website and, weirdly enough, fizzy drinks. He'd always been a controversial figure but nothing was as highly debated as his plan to create the first flight flown by a robot.

He was going to be one of the passengers on what the media were calling "Roboflight" and would be making a speech before it took off.

Once I had my uniform on, I walked into the break room. At one of the tables were Bea and James. I'd only met James a handful of times at initiation meetings and team building things but I'd worked with Bea before at another airline. She was normally a friendly, confident woman but today, she wasn't herself.

"The big day." Bea nervously muttered as I sat down.

"It will be fine, Bea. Relax." I said, trying to reassure her. James had other ideas though.

"Y'know what I like the least about this flight?" He laughed. "Nigel Roche is on it."

"Why is that the worst thing this flight?" Bea said, restlessly tapping her finger on the side of her plastic cup.

"Well, if the flight does go all iRobot, it's not going to us on the front page of the papers."

Bea attempted a laugh. It wasn't a great attempt.

Our new manager, Dan Blair swaggered into the break room.

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"Ladies and gentlemen, call  
excitement and self-worth

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outed his eyes full of

The room was silent. Dan smiled. "It's time."

### Chapter 3 by Grant Robertson



"We have machines making us food." Roche proclaimed behind his podium to the media. The rest of the cabin crew and I were standing behind him, smiling. Roche had made it very clear that this crew was not to include a back up human pilot. This was to display complete faith in the Roboflight concept and was justifiably a highly contested issue. "We have machines to tell us sports scores." He said, pulling out his phone. "Ah, West Ham just equalised." This was very on brand for Roche. "We have machines to tell us what the weather is, we have machines to tell us the news, we have machines to do our banking, for god's sake. Is it not about time that we start having machines move us across the world?"

"Today, we are not only going to travel from LAX to London Heathrow, we're also travelling to the future."

"I would now like to introduce you to today's pilot. Ladies and Gentlemen, meet Errol." Errol was a human shaped metallic frame who was wheeled up to a second microphone like a metallic Hannibal Lecter. It was to be placed in front of the controls and fly the plane like a human pilot. The tech community argued that Roche could have easily worked the coding into the plane itself but instead paid millions more and gave AAA far more work in order to create the impressive looking humanoid that was standing in front of me. It was very much seen as style over substance.

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen." Errol said in a synthesised yet creepily human sounding voice.

Whether Errol was style over substance or not, it seemed to work a dream. The crowd gasped and cheered and it wasn't very long before #Errol was trending on multiple social media sights.

"Well, I'd love to stay and chat to you wonderful people but sadly I've got a plane to catch." Roche said ending his speech before making a Columbo-style encore. "Oh and Errol." He turned

back to the robot. "What will weather like in London when we land?"

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"There will be heavy rain." Errol said. "That's not good. I'll be back in 10 minutes."

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"Don't be impressed by that," Roche smirked to his audience. "It's always raining in England."

We boarded the plane and carried out the pre-flight safety demonstration to the lucky competition winners and millionaires who sat before us.

I sat across the aisle from Bea as we waited to take flight. She had graduated from nervous to straight up terrified. The nerves were starting to get to me as well but I did my best to suppress them. "Bea." I said placing my hand on her shoulder. "Don't worry. If there was any real danger that anything could go wrong, they wouldn't be doing this flight at all."

I was about to find out how wrong I really was.

#### Chapter 4 by -



**\*'But they don't know we're up here!'**\*

As Errol was being wheeled into the cockpit, I couldn't help but notice the apprehension that was displayed on the passengers' faces. The one *face* that really took me by surprise was Errol's.

I just **HAD** to be imagining what I *thought* I saw! A robot doesn't have emotions! They're just a combination of nuts and bolts, figurately speaking. A computerized version embodiment of us humans.

So when I looked at Errol and saw a slew of emotions (none of them good, mind you) cross his metallic face, I knew something sinister was about to happen.

Suddenly, Errol caught me watching him. Tiny shivers encased my now cold body, for I have never seen such hatred on anyone's *face* before.

The excitement that I had initially felt upon being chosen as one of the first flight attendants to take part in a historical moment, soon turned to fear.

My first ever flight on the new up and coming way to travel, was going to be my downfall.

I just didn't know when

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Chapter 5 by fullwater

A hand suddenly grabbed  
on my shoulder.

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but I felt the hand tighten

i turned around and it was Dan. There was a hint of anger written across his face but it soon melted away.

"Maggie dear," he said, his hand releasing my shoulder.

"gods sake, this is a historical flight, the first of its kind. wear some smiles on ur face. remember, you're our CREW" he growled, his face maintaining a calm expression.

his voice trailed away when he noticed Nigel approaching us.

"Nigel, so great to have you on board. great day to make history" said Dan, his hand extended to nigel for a handshake.

"Yes great day indeed. i hope everyone is enjoying the flight. u guys are lucky to be the first few on board" replied Nigel, ignoring Dan's hand. i noticed that his tone was curt and he wasnt giving out his usual smiles.

Our conversation was interrupted when we heard a loud scream. the scream was a loud, shrilly one. it was coming from somewhere behind...

before i could identify the source of the screaming, i could feel the plane becoming rocky. the lights in the plane were blinking like disco lights.

i looked around but Dan and Nigel were gone now. the passengers around had passed out..

I was dreaming wasnt i? i pinched myself in the cheek, ouch, the pain was sharp but it was real.. what was happening?

"You're next" said Errol, strolling past me, the same hatred in his face. he waved his hand across his throat at me.

what was i going to do? i need a plan, i need to get Bea and James.

i felt chills running down my spine, my heart pouncing with fear

Chapter 6 by romantCaveman

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"Maggie"

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I breathed a sigh of relief. Bea picked up when I said that. This was a strict violation of airline protocol, but there was no way I was gonna attempt our cons when Errol might be able

to listen in.

"Bea?" I whispered, peaking out from between the seats. "Where are you?"

"I'm fine. I'm in standard class. Some poor woman had a mild anxiety attack after that last patch of turbulence. Not sure why if you had any anxiety about flying you'd ride 'air-roboflight,' but still--"

"Dan and Nigel have vanished and Errol's gone full iRobot!" I blurted out. I didn't know how long this connection would remain stable and had to get the word out as quickly as possible.

"What?" Bea asked. "Like, as in, actually walking around killing people? AI's won't suddenly go berserk unless you've specifically programmed them to! Oh god, did Roche deliberately make an AI that would kill us all?"

This was the same thing I thought, but between Bea's questioning and Errol's facial expressions, a connection formed in my mind.

"Bea," I said, trying to slow my racing heart. "I'm not sure Errol *is* an AI."

"What?"

"Think about it," I said, "that robot could've been any shape, or even integrated with the plane itself, but Nigel Roche *chose* to make a humanoid robot. That's a Hell of a lot of wasted money, even for a publicity stunt. You'd have to program motor skills, sense perception, individual servos for the fingers unless..."

Bea's voice was a whisper. "Unless you already had a brain who knew how to do all that."

"Errol's not a robot," I said weakly. "Because he's got a human brain."

I slumped to the ground between the seats. Errol was a cyborg. That was the only explanation for the emotions. There'd been incredible advances in medicine and cybernetics over the past

few years, but this was something else entirely: an entirely robotic body controlled by a human brain.

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One of the often publicized side effects of rejecting the prosthetic parts, usually through autoimmune disorders, I shivered. Would a person's *san*/r/ even survive

intact from a full body transplant?

"Who is he, then?" I said, half to myself and half to Bea. "What's he up to?"

Bea remained silent.

Too silent.

"Bea?" I whispered *"Bea!"*

"What a clever flight attendant." Errol's voice droned on the other end of the phone line.

The call disconnected. The lights of the plane went out.

### Chapter 7 by Grant Robertson



"Wake up, Mr Cole." I voiced said. Where was I? How did I get there? Why did I feel so weird? Was I in a hospital, loaded drugs?

It all came flooding back. He got away. His goons got to me before I could get to him. Jesus Christ, they shot me. Was I dying? First he steals my ideas then he fucking kills me. That smug prick.

I opened my eyes. Nope, this wasn't a hospital and the man standing before me was not a doctor. Three men in suits wearing sunglasses in front of me. FBI?

"You've had quite the day, Mr Cole and, oddly enough, trying to assassinate one of the world's richest man was nothing in comparison to the rest of it."

"Am I going to live? What are you going to do with me?"

"Two very good questions. You are going to live... now. And that's because of what we've already done to you."

I looked down at my body. Holy shit! It wasn't my body. Metal wires, circuit boards.

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"What the fuck have you done?"

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"Relax, Mr Cole, we're on your side."

"You were shot and... killed after managing to break into Nigel Roche's house armed with a pistol."

"Luckily we know some people in the Roche camp who were able to get us your body."

"Who are you? What do you want from me?"

"We are a cybernetic company who have recently gone into business with your old roommate in order to create the first pilot-less flight."

"So you're with him." I snarled.

The man darkly smiled. "No, he doesn't know you're here. He doesn't even know that you tried to murder him in his own home."

"You see, Mr Roche has given us a lot of money, however, someone else has given us even more. We have a job for you, Mr Cole, and, considering how we got you here, I'm imagining that this may also be a bit of a passion project for you. As you see, currently, you look more robot than man but, once you complete this task, we will complete work on you."

"Mr Cole, do you know what would happen if Mr Roche and his family were killed in, let's say, a tragic airplane accident?" I didn't. "It would go to you. Everything. The streaming site, the airline, the computer hardware, even the fizzy drinks "

"Until then, you are no longer Stanley Cole the internet entrepreneur, you are, henceforth, Errol, the friendly robot pilot of AAA's flight from LAX to London Heathrow."

**Write a draft for the last chapter** (1 draft)

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